

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' BULLETIN No. 1087 *new*
Nov. 1929

BEAUTIFYING THE FARMSTEAD



A HOME and its surroundings must be attractive in order to be most uplifting to the family, visitors, and passers-by.

Farmsteads especially need attention in order to secure satisfactory conditions. The farm home and the farm business are so closely related that the success of the latter is reflected in the appearance of the former.

All the buildings with their immediate surroundings must be considered. The roads and walks; the home vegetable, fruit, and flower gardens; the lawns; and the ornamental plantings are also important factors in determining the plan.

Each building needs sufficient land about it to give it a proper appearance and provide the necessary yards or work room, and each should be so located with respect to other buildings as to facilitate the work of the farm.

Roads and walks should be limited to the number necessary to facilitate daily traffic.

Vegetable, fruit, and flower gardens must provide liberally for the family needs.

The lawns should be so located and of such size as to give a pleasing setting for the home, but not so large as to make their care burdensome.

Suitable plantings are necessary to unite the parts of a farmstead into a pleasing, homelike whole. Trees are used for windbreaks, as frames for the buildings or a background for them, and to give shade. Shrubs are needed in abundance to hide partially the foundation lines of buildings, support their corners, give reasons for turns in drives or walks, define boundaries, and screen unsightly objects.

Native trees and shrubs and those known by trial to thrive in the locality are the best to use.

BEAUTIFYING THE FARMSTEAD

By FURMAN LLOYD MULFORD, *associate horticulturist, Division of Fruit and Vegetable Crops and Diseases, Bureau of Plant Industry*

CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Need of beautifying the farmstead.....	1	Lawns.....	21
Planning for improvements in advance.....	3	Arrangement of plantings.....	25
Style of the design.....	4	Trees.....	25
Location of the buildings.....	7	Shrubs.....	29
Walks and drives.....	9	Other plants.....	32
Service features.....	19	Plant material.....	33

NEED OF BEAUTIFYING THE FARMSTEAD

HOMES are the foundation of a nation. With clean, attractive, pure homes the youth become strong, upright, honorable citizens. Anything that will make the home better will tend to improve citizenship.

The essentials of a good home are a man and women resolved by their mutual efforts to make this world a better place in which to live and a structure that will protect life and health from undue exposure to the elements. If the dwelling is to be really a home it must be more than a place at which to eat and sleep (fig. 1). It must be for the mature a haven of rest from vexations incident to breadwinning and other serious duties of life and for the young a retreat for the solution of life's problems. Inspiration to better living must be there, incentive to strive diligently for the highest ideals; and to attain these ends not only must the physical needs of the family be supplied moderately well, but the home must be attractive (fig. 2).

The foundation of this attractiveness is love among the members of the household, combined with a right moral, mental, and religious attitude. This attitude is greatly influenced by the surroundings. Sufficiency of food and exercise with other physical comforts in moderation are conducive to the highest development, while marked deficiency or excess of physical comforts is debilitating. Beauty in every form has an influence for good. Forms of beauty differ greatly in their effect on persons. Children, especially, are wonderfully affected for good or ill by their surroundings. The greatest influences are probably seldom realized at the time they are exerted.

The efforts of women to make homes attractive usually include the immediate surroundings of the dwelling. In suburban communities and in cities that are not too closely built up, men are cooperating more and more actively in the development of home grounds and often take the initiative. On farms the little attention that is given this matter is often contributed solely by the women of the household. The attention attracted by properly located, well-arranged



FIGURE 1.—A comfortable place to eat and sleep, but not all a home should be.
Compare with Figure 2.



FIGURE 2.—The house shown in Figure 1 made homelike and attractive by plantings.

several years, so these improvements can be made when the time comes without interfering with other features of the plan.

When an established place is to be improved it should be studied in the same way as a new place, forgetting all roads and structures except possibly the largest and most expensive buildings; even these should not be assumed to be incapable of being altered.

In planning a new place the first thing to be considered is the approximate location of the principal buildings, with the space they should have about them and the relation of that space and of the buildings to one another. Then the necessary drives and walks should be located, as well as all service features, such as work yards, laundry yard, and gardens. After this the detailed plans of the buildings should be worked out to conform to the general scheme, followed finally by the planting suggestions. To prevent difficulties it is necessary to plan the grounds carefully before the building plans are made and then make the building plans to suit. In this connection it is essential to study thoroughly the land conditions as to elevation, slopes, and drainage and also the desirability of the different points of the compass as exposures for the important rooms of the home or for facing the different buildings or the yards adjoining them.¹

In addition, it is necessary to decide whether the development is to be simple and inexpensive or elaborate and pretentious, and whether the greatest possible economy of funds and land is essential or whether a liberal expenditure is permissible.

STYLE OF THE DESIGN

So far no distinctive type of American farm architecture has developed, although some localities have evolved characteristic styles. It may be expected that eventually many communities will develop their own styles especially suited to the local conditions. There are, however, two distinct types of landscape designs that are well recognized, the informal and the formal.

Informal design in landscapes (figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 12) in its purest form consists entirely of irregular curved lines. When straight lines or regular curves do appear they are united with architectural features, such as buildings, boundaries, steps, tennis courts, and formal gardens. Informal design is economical in development, as it usually can be made to conform closely to existing conditions, thus reducing grading to a minimum. It can be maintained with little work.

On the other hand, formal design in landscape (the flower gardens in figs. 3, 5, and 24 and the plan in fig. 9) is composed of geometrical figures, usually symmetrical,² and always balanced.³ It is frequently emphasized by architectural or sculptural additions.

¹ For further study of this phase of the subject consult the following publication, which shows a desirable arrangement for the same set of buildings when the desirable outlook faces each of the cardinal points of the compass: BETTS, M. C., and HUMPHRIES, W. R. *PLANNING THE FARMSTEAD*. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1132. 24 p. illus. 1920.

² "Symmetry" in landscape design means that each part on one side of a central axis is exactly duplicated on the other. Each half of the design reflects the other half.

³ "Balance" in landscape design means that the features on each side of an axis are of equal interest, but not necessarily alike. A symmetrical design is balanced, but a balanced design need not be symmetrical. The axis must be in the center of the interest, not necessarily in the center of the design. A large area of lawn with little planting on one side of a walk may be balanced, for example, by a smaller area on the other if it contains more striking objects.

In general, the more straight lines are used the greater is the formality. The buildings need to be regularly and symmetrically placed and appropriately designed. The ground must be graded to suit the plan. All the details both of grounds and of buildings must be carefully worked out to conform with one another, and the upkeep must be of the best continually. Formal design is inelastic, not readily permitting additions, and is relatively expensive in both installation and maintenance. A design may be symmetrical in all its parts or only in general outline while the details vary on the two sides of the axis.

In general, only informal designs are applicable to farmsteads, except in limited garden areas.

Each plan is a study in itself, and only by considering the conditions to be met can a successful one be made (figs. 4 and 5). The making of a good plan of the informal style is not difficult if the effort is made to meet existing conditions without attempting to do things simply for show.

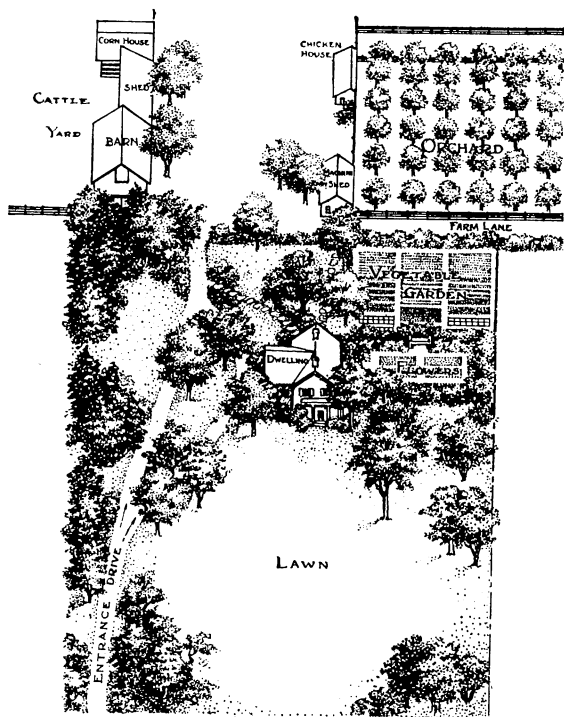


FIGURE 4.—Plan of a farmstead located near the highway.

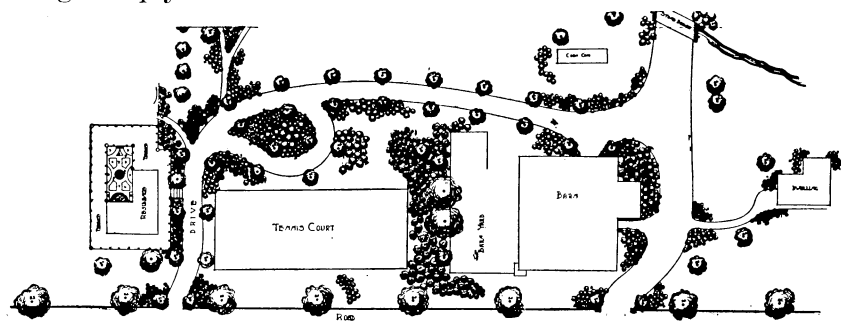


FIGURE 5.—A plan for a farmstead when a good house, barn, and tenant house were already erected close to the public road.

The successful plan is one in which compromises are successfully made to give a livable, workable whole with an appearance of modest comfort. On most farms this work can well be done by the farmer

and his family. For expensive places or for places where much grading is involved, the employment of a landscape designer is usually more satisfactory and economical.

If the plan is good, much can be accomplished in the way of improved appearance with only a little work for installation and maintenance. If too much ground is included in the farmstead or if the design is made too intricate, the care of the premises will be

burdensome. A little ground neatly kept is more attractive than more ground not well maintained. On a small farm 2 acres can often be made to accommodate the buildings, with fruit and vegetable gardens adequate for a small family (fig. 6), while on larger places 10 acres or more may not be inappropriate. The more pretentious the buildings, the more ground is required to give a proper setting. Cramped grounds dwarf the effect. Too much ground is undesirable, because the care required is out of proportion to the needs.

The essentials of a good design for a home are that the buildings and grounds shall be comfortable, convenient, appropriate, and attractive. The first

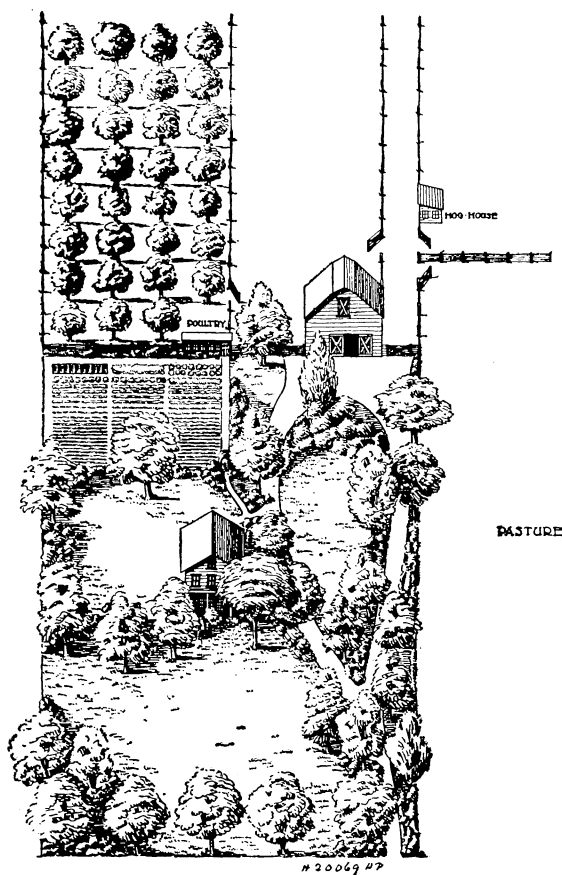


FIGURE 6.—Plan of a 2-acre farmstead.

three conditions should be solved with the fourth constantly in mind so that all will be worked out together.

If a formal flower garden (figs. 3, 4, and 24) or other features that require special attention in maintenance are desired, the grounds should be so planned that these may be added after the other portions are developed and the amount of care necessary to maintain the developed portions has been determined from experience. In this way, features calling for special maintenance will not be added until sufficient labor is known to be available to care for them properly.

The personal tastes of the members of the family should determine very largely the extent and character of the development.

LOCATION OF THE BUILDINGS

The factors that should determine the location of buildings are (1) access to a good highway, (2) possibility of protection from objectionable winds or the utilization of desirable ones, (3) practicability of adequate drainage, (4) a sufficient supply of good water, and (5) desirability of outlook.

The construction of hard-surface roads in the open country is making it possible to get to and from town at all times of the year. This is important for both business and pleasure. The exposure is an important consideration for securing the comfort of the family and stock. In cold countries protection from the winter winds is desirable, and the location of the most used rooms should be on the warmest side of the house, while in warm countries the house and living rooms need to be so located as to get the benefit of prevailing winds during the hottest months.

If at all possible, the house should be so located near good trees that their shade may be used and enjoyed by the family every day during the summer. It takes so long to grow good trees that existing trees should be cherished and utilized to the fullest extent.

The elevation should be such as to make possible thorough drainage, even though it may be desirable to keep off the highest ground. Under no circumstances should the house get the drainage from other buildings.

In a hilly or mountainous country the site should provide a little level land immediately adjoining the buildings, especially the dwelling. This is necessary both for appearance and for comfort in living. Where such a setting is not provided the house is likely to give the impression of being about to slide from its location, while with a little level ground close by, it may give the appearance of fitting closely into the site. In the case of a side hill or bank house it may be necessary to build with one side facing on a higher level than the other. If the level areas are of reasonable extent, although at different heights and separated from each other, the desired impression may still be given.

The rooms used most should be given the benefit of the best views; those from the kitchen as well as from the living room should be attractive. The near view should be over an unbroken lawn, and there should be some object of interest beyond. If there are no such objects in the general landscape, such as a mountain, a water view, a woodland, a meadow, or an extended farm view, a handsome tree or other bit of nearby landscape may be available. Lacking these, possibly some feature may be created on the place, such as an attractive group of shrubs, well placed and arranged so as to have something of interest each month.

The area that should be set aside for the house lot is dependent on many factors. The larger and more pretentious the house the more land should appear to be with it. Though it may be necessary to have a lawn that is small, it is frequently possible to increase the apparent size by making adjacent areas appear to belong with it.

If the apparent size cannot be increased, as suggested under "Lawns", it should be at least possible to prevent the dwarfing of the appearance by growing only low crops in the near-by fields,



FIGURE 7.—A farmstead having too many unrelated buildings.

keeping tall crops and orchards at a little distance. Where this is impracticable the area of the home lot should be doubled or trebled.

The barns should be properly arranged to facilitate the farm work and be accessible to the road, but they must also be reasonably



FIGURE 8.—A direct-approach road that appears to lead primarily to the house through an appropriate entrance. It leaves the lawn unbroken in front of the house, thus giving a desirable setting for it.

convenient to the house without being too close, prominent, or obtrusive. They should be so situated with respect to the house that the prevailing winds, especially during those seasons when the doors and windows are likely to be open, do not blow from the barns

toward the house. On the other hand, in cold climates the barn as well as the house needs protection from severe winter winds.

Further, the buildings must be arranged for convenience. The interior of the house and its connection with the outside features, whether the barns or the public road, should be adapted to the everyday life of the family. All too common examples of inappropriate farm architecture are front doors that are never used except for funerals, and parlors that are so seldom used that when they are they cast a reserve over the whole family. Drives and walks to such front doors are a meaningless formality and should be eliminated. In a house of such design the neighbors usually go directly to the kitchen, because they know that is the entrance the family uses, and the life of the family is so far from the front door that it is impossible to get any response even if the attempt is made. A more pleasing and satisfactory arrangement is to have the entrance open directly on the part of the house the family uses (figs. 3 and 4).

The entrance should be so located as to be easy and natural for both family and visitors to use. The approaches to it should be so direct that there is no feeling of being taken out of the way in following the roads or walks provided. In such an arrangement the entrance and approaches are naturally used in accordance with their design.

The barns should be at a little distance from the house, but close enough to facilitate the work to be done, and of such a character architecturally that they look as though they belonged together. The buildings should be as few in number as is practicable, or at least should have the appearance of being a unified group from the principal viewpoints. Such results can be brought about by careful grouping, sometimes even building them around a courtyard, or if necessary connecting some of them by sheds or walls. The objection to close grouping is the danger from fire, but facility in doing the work may be an offset to this. A number of small unrelated buildings gives a "cluttered up" appearance (fig. 7).

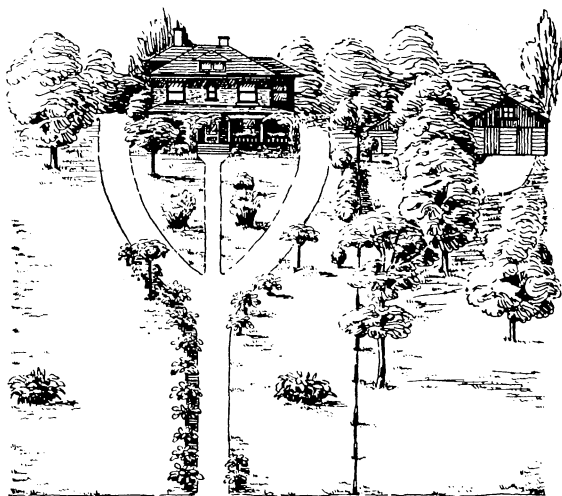


FIGURE 9.—Undesirable arrangement of an approach to a farmstead. Compare with Figure 10.

WALKS AND DRIVES

The entrance to the farmstead from the public road should be so located as to facilitate direct and easy access to both house and barn

and make the approach to either seem natural and easy, while at the same time appearing to lead primarily to the house (fig. 8). It should be direct, but as a rule not straight toward any of the buildings (fig. 9). Where the buildings are near the highway, a good plan is to have a single road enter the grounds, then divide, one branch going directly to the barn and the other past the side of the house, passing near the main-entrance door (fig. 10), thence near the kitchen entrance, rejoining the road to the barn in such a way that the traffic may conveniently pass to the barn or return to the highway (figs. 4, 6, 11, and 12). This arrangement of a double road is to permit traffic to reach the barn without passing close to the house, while not greatly increasing the extent of road surface. The approaches should be so curved as to permit plantings partially to hide the barns and service yards. In hilly countries the lay of the land

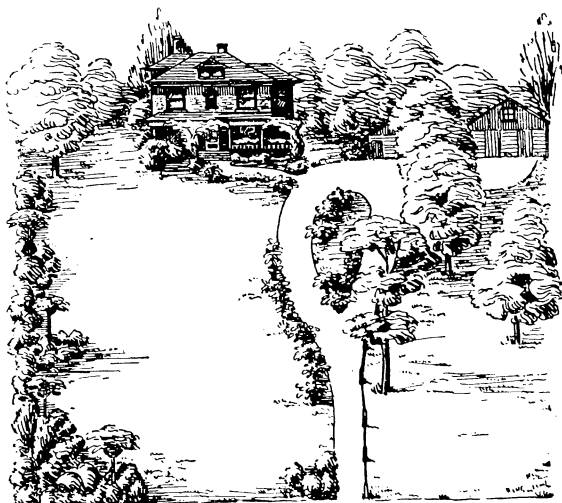


FIGURE 10.—A revised design for an approach to the farmstead shown in Figure 9.

will largely determine what may be done, and it correspondingly gives opportunities for variety of treatment.

In flat countries the problem of providing an approach is not so difficult, but it requires thought and care to have it convenient without being commonplace and uninteresting.

Where the buildings are located far from the highway, an approach from the public road to the group of buildings becomes neces-

sary. In hilly countries this will often need to be curved in order to avoid objectionable grades. As far as possible the road surface should be kept hidden from the home, but on approaching, the visitor should, from time to time, get glimpses of the house and should feel that he is going toward it, although not straight at it. In a flat country, especially where the farms are all laid out in rectangles, the approach from the highway should be straight till it reaches the farmstead (fig. 12) when the same general scheme may be adopted as though the farmstead were located directly on the highway.

A long straight approach road is made more effective by a row of trees on each side (fig. 13) forming a vista under their tops. There should be some attractive object to which the eye is drawn at the end of the vista, such as a beautiful tree or a clump of shrubbery. It is seldom desirable to have a door as the focal point, but where one is used it should be an entrance door, not the door that leads to the lawns and pleasure grounds of the family, as the latter should have more



FIGURE 11.—A good approach for buildings near the highway.

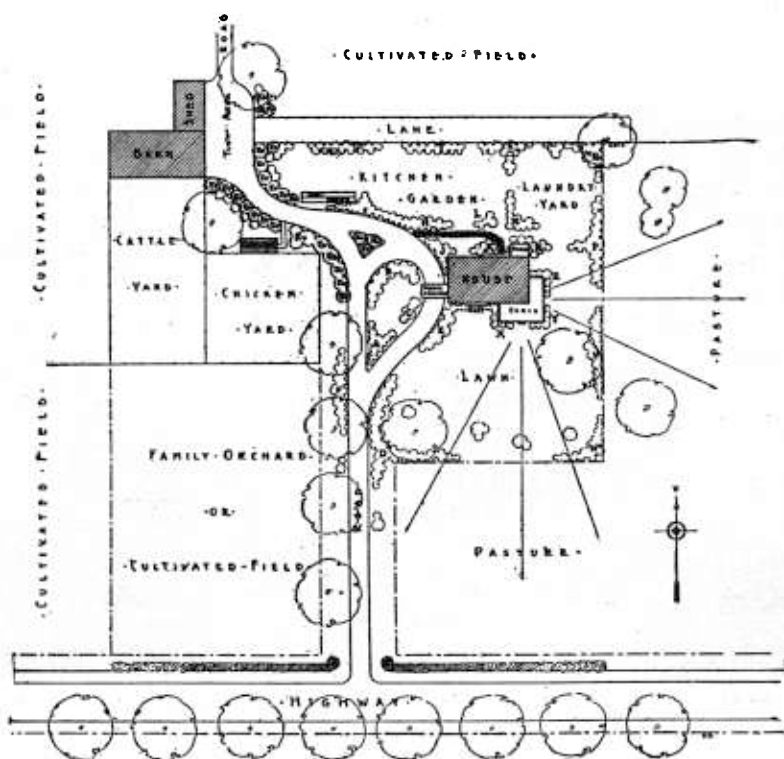


FIGURE 12.—A good entrance to buildings located well back from the highway.



FIGURE 13.—A long straight approach made attractive by a row of trees on each side.

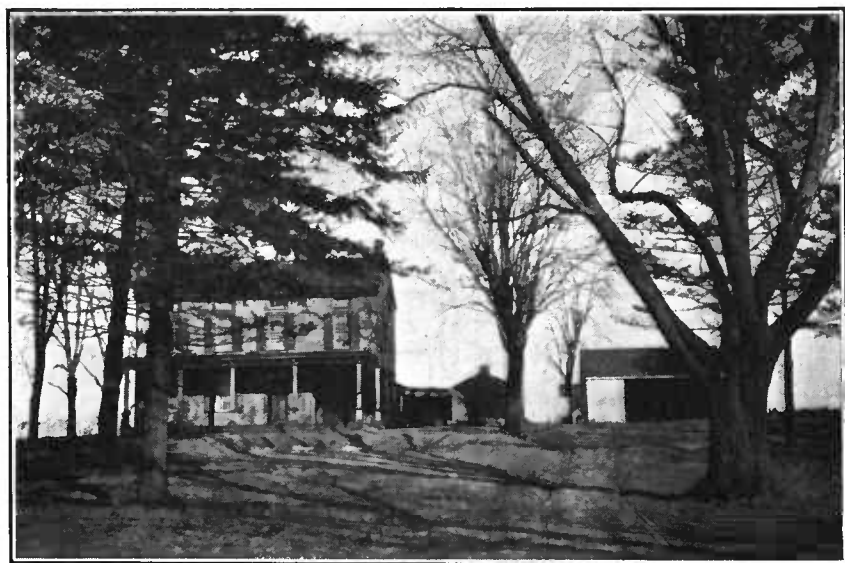


FIGURE 14.—An inappropriate approach to a farmhouse. The opening to the woodshed could easily be screened by a careful planting of evergreens.

privacy than could be given a door fully exposed to view from the main approach. Also when a doorway is used the driveway should swing away from the direct approach before it comes too close. On the other hand, ugly or uninteresting objects should not be the terminus of such a vista (fig. 14).

The other walks and roads about the farmstead should be as few as possible. All real needs should be met, but no provision should be made for fancied or possible ones. If in doubt, leave out a walk until experience shows the need of it.

All roads and walks should be so located as to give the feeling of leading to their destination without unnecessary turns. This does not mean that they must be straight. They might be slightly curved and yet give the impression of leading to the desired end. Where the distance is not too short a curved walk or drive usually gives



FIGURE 15.—A satisfying result with a slightly curved roadway, a deviation of not more than its own width.

a more pleasing effect than a straight one. The amount of curve need not be great; often a deviation of the width of a walk or drive (fig. 15) will answer, while one and one-half times its width will be ample. On the other hand, curves should not be too abrupt, and there should appear to be a reason for each. Appropriate plantings can often be made to supply this reason, and they are always useful in supplementing other reasons. In a rolling or hilly country the slope of the land can usually be made to give an excuse for the curves.

Paths and roads should be kept as nearly out of sight as is feasible. Where practicable to conceal them by construction behind knolls or through depressions, this should be done if it does not interfere too seriously with their directness and if good drainage can be provided. Planting of trees or shrubs may also be used. (Fig. 16.) Paths should not be installed where established roads can be utilized, even

though it may take extra care and expense to keep the road surface in condition for the dual purpose of walk and drive. If it should not be practicable to keep the road in good condition for foot traffic, of course a separate footway would need to be developed, but it should be omitted unless really necessary. From the standpoint of both appearance and expense of upkeep, the fewest possible drives and walks should be provided. A little-used walk or drive is usually as troublesome and as expensive to keep up as a much-used one, as it will grow full of weeds and will wash whether used or not.

The entrance from the highway should largely reflect and suggest the character of the farmstead. The less formality there is in the farmstead the less there should be at the entrance. Some special treatment is necessary, however, to attract attention to it and set it apart from the rest of the boundary and to invite entrance, at least to the extent of inciting the wish to enter in those who pass. The char-



FIGURE 16.—A well-hidden approach and service road. (See fig. 15 for another view of the same road.)

acter of this special treatment must so nearly correspond with the rest of the treatment of the farmstead that it can be united with it without an abrupt change of style at any point. The transition from a heavy stone or brick post to a barbed-wire fence is difficult unless the size of the farmstead is such that there is sufficient distance to make the transition gradually. If the post is flanked by a wall of the same material that ultimately becomes the same height as the fence, and the fence and wall are covered with vines for a considerable distance on each side of the joining, a successful transition can be accomplished. Such a wall, however, is inappropriate unless built of native stone in evidence in fences or buildings in the neighborhood or else like the stone or brick clearly evident in some portion of the buildings.

The design of the wall also has an important bearing on its appropriateness. The wall of native stone in figure 17 is appropriate and attractive. Figure 18 also shows a good entrance for its location, but



FIGURE 17.—A well-designed entrance. The appearance of the stone wall has been improved by recessing the cement joints.



FIGURE 18.—A good gateway and wall for the location. Were it not for the mass of foliage behind, the posts would be too tall and too heavy.



FIGURE 19.—A wall suited only to a formal landscape.



FIGURE 20.—Informal plantings at the entrance to a farmstead.

one that would be most inappropriate were it not for the heavy background of trees. The wall is good and is well covered with vines. The posts would be too heavy as well as too tall in most situations. The wall in figure 19 is so formal that it should be used only with a formal landscape, and then only when the buildings are of a similar checkered design.

Plants can be much more easily arranged to emphasize an entrance without overdoing it than can architectural features. Entrance plantings may either be formal such as hedges (fig. 8) or regularly placed specimens or clumps, or they may be altogether informal and irregular (fig. 20).

As with all other details of the farmstead, development at the entrance, whether primarily of plants or of other material, must be appropriate in size, shape, and kind. Especially with plants there is a wide latitude of possibilities that may be appropriate, but the limits must not be exceeded if a fitting result is to be obtained.

As a rule, farm roads will be made of the natural soil and should be well crowned and provided with good gut-



FIGURE 21.—A turf gutter.

ters with liberal outlets. In most parts of the United States little-used roads and many paths even though much used can be covered with turf and mowed, like the lawn. If the road is used sufficiently to cause ruts, soil can be brought to fill them. Where a more resistant surface is needed for a short time each season, stones 2 inches in size or larger may be mixed with good soil, and 6 or 8 inches of the surface of the road may be formed of that material. Grass will grow in the soil, and the stones will not permit a cutting up of the roadbed or the permanent destruction of the grass. The grass tops may be worn off by the traffic, but the roots will push out again after the wear ceases. Turf gutters (fig. 21) may be found satisfactory for road and walk drainage in all sections where there is sufficient moisture to maintain turf growth. To be successful, no ridge or shoulder should be permitted between the turf and the road. Some material always collects in the gutter, gradually raising it, so that every few years it is desirable to lift the sod, remove some of the dirt under it,

and relay it. Although this may seem like a good deal of a job, it will probably have to be done so infrequently as to prove one of the most economical ways of maintaining a gutter.

Where an artificial road surface is needed, it should be as inconspicuous in color as possible. Cinders are one of the most desirable private-road surfacings, both on account of the color and because of good road-making qualities. Oyster shells, crushed limestone, con-

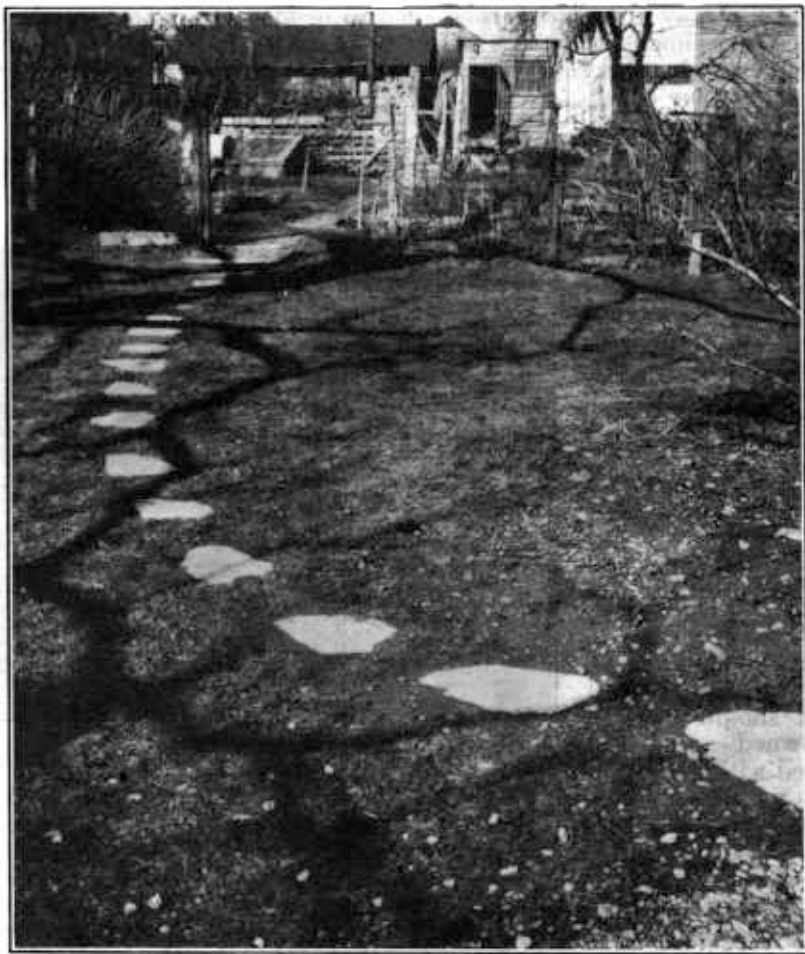


FIGURE 22.—A stepping-stone walk.

crete, and light-colored brick each have an objectionable color, contrasting too strongly with the normal green of country surroundings. Stone with dark asphaltic oil or concrete colored by lampblack is pleasing in appearance.

Turf does not make a good surfacing for footways that are much used in wet weather, especially if used when frost is coming out of the ground. For such conditions nothing is more attractive than

flat stones placed in the turf with the grass growing between them (fig. 22), but they need to be set low enough to permit the lawn mower to pass over them. If, however, a cement walk is necessary, a dark color should be given it by the free use of lampblack, while crushed-stone walks can be held together and be more suitably colored by using some asphalt or coal-tar preparation.

SERVICE FEATURES

Provision must be made for features that facilitate the work of the farm or increase the comfort of living. These include such things as work yards, storage yards, and cattle yards about the barns, an ice house or a place for a mechanical refrigerator, fuel storage, and laundry yard near the house. Fruit, vegetable, and flower



FIGURE 23.—A combined vegetable and flower garden convenient to the home. This turf walk is used as the turning space for the cultivator which runs between the rows laid out at right angles to this turf entrance way.

gardens should also be provided. Such features may be so arranged as to serve the needs without being unduly conspicuous. One feature frequently overlooked is provision for the delivery of the fuel supply near the place where it is to be used from roads arranged for other purposes. Failure to provide this is a continual cause of vexation.

Wherever possible, buildings for several purposes should be united or be so located as to appear as one rather than multiply the number of buildings, as a large number of small apparently unrelated buildings detracts greatly from the appearance.

Gardens for growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers for indoor decoration, as well as the ornamental flower garden, are part of the farmstead and should be used in its setting. They will be pleasing in appearance if properly placed, well laid out, well cultivated, and kept neat. They should be located so they are convenient

to the house (fig. 23), but usually not between the house and the road or at any other point where they will detract from the view of the farmhouse from the highway. A partial hiding of them by ornamental plantings may often so reduce their conspicuousness in an otherwise undesirable place as to make them a pleasing part of the picture. They should be arranged so that they can be efficiently cultivated, preferably by horsepower, as two essentials of an attractive farmstead are neatness and the evidence of cultural success. The accomplishment of these should be made as easy as practicable without unduly sacrificing the decorative possibilities. The more ornamental the garden is designed to be, the greater the care required in its culture and maintenance. The careful placing and arranging of fruit and vegetable gardens, however, should not be made an excuse for omitting a flower garden, even though it has to be a small



FIGURE 24.—A formal flower garden with informal plantings.

one. Occasionally it may be combined with the vegetable or the fruit garden.

An ornamental garden, whether devoted to flowers, vegetables, or fruits, is in the nature of a transition from the formalities of the house to the informalities of the lawns. Its purpose and use should be largely that of an outdoor room. It may be either formal (fig. 24) or informal, but in either case it should be regarded as part of the house and its activities, not as its principal setting. It comes closer into the family life if it is on the side of the house away from the public entrance and near to the living porch, so that it is easily entered from the porch. It should be included whenever the family tastes and circumstances permit the expenditure of the extra labor involved.

Such a garden may be simple, involving little work, or it may be elaborate. It should be the most definite expression of the family tastes. A place for such a garden should be provided on the plan, but it may be left in lawn until the time comes for its development.

Probably the greatest enjoyment of such a garden comes in its gradual making. Within the shrubbery borders, walks, arbors, seats, a summer house, or a pool may be incorporated. Here personal taste may find free expression with less restraint from surrounding conditions than in any other part of the grounds.

Flowers about the house are to beautify the grounds; therefore to depend on such flowers for cutting is to defeat the purpose for which they are intended. Although flowers may at times be cut from general plantings or from an ornamental flower garden without injury or detriment, yet such plantings should not be regarded as the legitimate source of cut flowers nor should cuttings be permitted to such extent as to mar the appearance of the planting as a whole. Most of the flowers for cutting for indoor decoration should be grown especially for that purpose, either in rows in the vegetable garden,

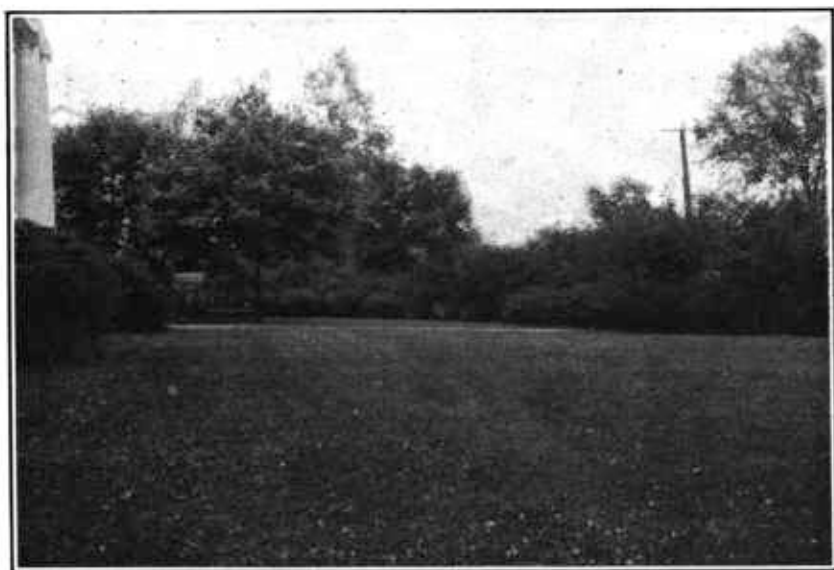


FIGURE 25.—A lawn with irregular outlines.

where they can be cultivated by horse tools, or in their own garden, which also should be arranged for economical cultivation.

LAWNS

Lawns are the background or foundation against which all the details are viewed. They should be in as large and unbroken stretches as possible, as this produces a pleasing effect, tending to give an impression of great extent and also making them easier to maintain. The borders should be irregular (fig. 25), for an irregular outline increases the apparent size of the grounds by not revealing at one glance their actual limits, the depths of all the bays are not visible from any point, curiosity is aroused as to what may be in the hidden places, and thus the grounds are made more interesting.

The surface of the lawn should be smooth enough to permit the easy running of the lawn mower, but many of the natural undula-

tions should be kept, and if the surface is inclined to be flat some effort might be expended to increase them slightly. Steep banks are objectionable, as they are more difficult to maintain than moderate slopes. Wherever it is necessary to have changes in grade, an effort should be made to accomplish it in the most natural manner prac-

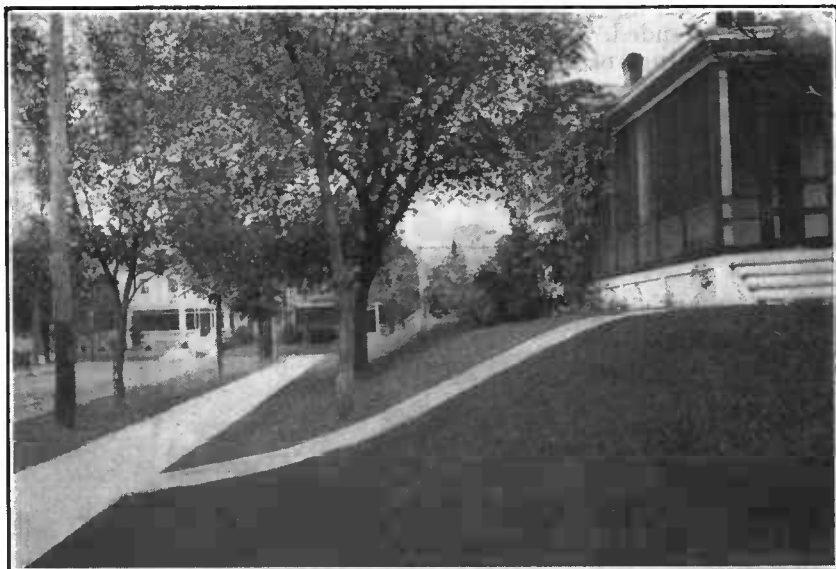


FIGURE 26.—A sharp ogee. There should be no line between the convex curve at the top and the concave one at the bottom; they should merge one into the other.



FIGURE 27.—A long ogee.

ticable. If at all possible this should be by using a double curve, known to carpenters and landscape designers as an "ogee", which consists of a convex surface for the upper part of the slope and a concave surface for the lower part. Such curves may be either short and sharp (fig. 26) or long and flat (fig. 27).



FIGURE 28.—A bank held by rocks.

Where banks similar to those on railroad cuts or fills are necessary they should be held in place by embedding rocks in the surface (fig. 28) when stone is available, and planting among the stones, or by setting out shrubs or vigorous vines (fig. 29).



FIGURE 29.—A bank held by vines.

Plane surfaces, either flat like a table or on a slope like a roof, are not desirable except in formal gardening.

The best lawn cover for the region should be used, even if it requires a little more care to establish it. In most parts of the United States this is grass. In a few places other ground covers must be used unless great care can be given the lawn.

Lawns should be of sufficient size to give an ample setting, especially for the house. If well placed, 2,000 or 3,000 square feet may answer all purposes, although much more space is better. The apparent size of a lawn may often be materially increased by having a pasture adjoining it and separated by the most inconspicuous fence possible, located in the least obtrusive position. (Fig. 30.) By care in scattering manure from time to time in order to prevent the grass from growing in clumps, and by cutting weeds or grasses that tend



FIGURE 30.—A pasture as an extension of a lawn.

to grow in bunches, such a pasture may be made a very attractive extension of the lawn, especially if it is provided with a few clumps of fine trees.

If the surface of the lawn is made reasonably smooth and it has been graded so that there are no steep banks, keeping the grass cut should be a comparatively easy matter. The finest turf is obtained by cutting with a lawn mower every 5 to 10 days, depending on the season. A small area can be cut with a hand mower or a larger one with a horse-drawn mower. If the time necessary to keep a turf smoothly shaven is felt to be greater than is justifiable, an ordinary field mowing machine may be used from once in 2 weeks to 2 or 3 times in a season.

If cut every 2 weeks, it may be possible to permit all clippings to remain on the ground. If cut less frequently the clippings will probably have to be removed after each mowing. Animals should

not be turned on the lawn to graze, as they will be likely to eat and trample the shrubbery as well as the grass. It is best to make a clear distinction between a lawn and a pasture extension.

ARRANGEMENT OF PLANTINGS

Although the discussion of planting is left until last, it is not because it is of least importance in the development of an attractive farmstead, but rather to make more clear its true function. There is a widespread lack of appreciation of the importance of the matters already discussed, and a corresponding feeling that no matter how poorly arranged and designed a place may be it can be made beautiful by a few flower beds properly located. This idea of the power of plants to beautify is not entirely erroneous, but it is certainly exaggerated. Although they can greatly soften grave faults, they cannot hide them. While even a well-designed farmstead is bare and unattractive (fig. 1) until properly united by plantings of trees, shrubs, and flowers (fig. 2), on the other hand plants may be so poorly arranged that they fail to add as much to the appearance as they might.

Plant arrangement as well as design of the grounds may be either formal or informal. Formal planting is the arrangement of plants in regular order, either in straight lines or in balanced geometrical designs. This is true whether the effect is produced from the regular placing of individual plants or by massing several specimens of a kind. Such planting is appropriate only in a formal design, which on farmsteads would be in connection with long straight approaches or in formal gardens.

Informal planting is the arrangement of plants irregularly, more or less in the manner in which they are found in native woodlands and thickets, and they may be used singly or in groups of any size with any number of kinds. Planting of this kind is appropriate with either a formal or an informal design and is especially adapted to farmsteads and home grounds.

In formal plantings all the plants must be set and trained to conform to the design (figs. 3 and 24), while informal plantings should be placed irregularly and trained to bring out the individual characteristics of each variety, so that the result may be as varied, graceful, and natural as possible.

TREES

Trees are of great importance in giving an attractive appearance to the farmstead as well as in making it a more comfortable place in which to live. They should be planted with the possibilities of this twofold use clearly in mind. In most of the country north of the fortieth parallel there is need of protection from the cold northwest winds of winter and also of shade about the buildings in summer. To meet the former requirement, groups or clumps of trees should be so located that they break the force of these objectionable winter winds, while at the same time they occupy the least possible area of tillable land.⁴ In hilly regions many farm buildings are built in the

⁴ Information on shelter-belt planting is found in the following publication: WILSON, R., PLANTING AND CARE OF SHELTER BELTS ON THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1603, 13 p., illus. 1929.

lee of a rise of ground or close against the side of a hill, so that there is less need of shelter planting. Such plantings are more effective if made largely of evergreen trees, especially those which normally hold their lower limbs. Where shelter is needed it should be so located with respect to the buildings that the trees will not only give the needed protection but also form a background or setting for the buildings from as many points as possible. In addition to the trees providing the shelter, smaller flowering trees can be used in front to give an added interest. In other large areas, particularly in the western part of the country, where protection is needed from drying southwest winds, a similar use can be made of shelter plantings.

Shade trees should be located having in mind first their value as a setting for the building and then the desirable points at which to provide shade, as they will give shade wherever they are set, but will



FIGURE 31.—Trees partially hiding a house front.

make a good setting only when properly placed. A sufficient number of trees should be used, however, to make enough shade to invite to outdoor life near the house. They should not be planted directly in front, but should be placed somewhat to each side so as to make a frame through which a view of a portion of the front is obtained, and so that when they are grown they partially shade the house without entirely covering the front. A common fault is to plant too many trees and plant them so close to the house that the shade is too dense and keeps out all the sunshine and much of the air. For this reason as well as for the sake of appearance it is desirable that the trees be so planted that at maturity their branches will not meet across the front of the house (fig. 31).

It is usually desirable to have a large shade tree or trees somewhere near the southwest corner, as protection is most needed from

the mid-afternoon sun. This may bring them to the rear of the house as a background (fig. 32) instead of as a screen in front. Not only should a portion of the front be seen from the principal viewpoint, but there should be an open lawn as a foreground. This lawn may be bordered on either side by plantings of trees or shrubs, or both, depending on its size and the character of the development. If the lawn extends to the road, this side may also have trees, under the branches of which views of the house may be obtained. If the house is so far from the road that the lawn does not extend across the intervening space, it is usually inadvisable to inclose the road side of it with trees, no matter how large it may be, as that would entirely hide the house from what would naturally be the principal viewpoint. Although it is desirable partially to hide the outlines of all the buildings, it takes from the interest to have them completely hidden. It may be advisable to have some trees on the road side of



FIGURE 32.—Trees at the back of the house form a frame.

such a lawn, but liberal vistas should be kept open, so that some good views of the house are obtained.

The house and its surroundings, as the home center and the most important unit of the farmstead group, has been emphasized in this discussion, but the barns and other buildings also need to be partially hidden. If they have been well located and planned, a little judicious planting of trees and shrubs will so modify their appearance that they will not overshadow the house even though they are much larger.

It must be recognized, however, that this is not as easy to accomplish without interfering with other vital considerations as in the planting about the house. For example, with dairy and stock barns it is not possible, as a rule, to plant close to the south side, because of shading the yards in winter, thus depriving the cattle of the full sunshine and also possibly making the yard a mudhole. In many cases the south is the principal viewpoint. Sometimes, however,

trees can be planted to overhang the corners of the barn (fig. 33) or, if it is not too high, can be behind it, partially framing it in foliage. Here, again, care must be used both in selecting varieties and in placing them so that the tops will not interfere with hauling in hay and grain or the trunks interfere with other necessary work.

Paddocks are needed on nearly all farms, and the inclusion of a few trees in the lot is helpful to the stock. When such paddocks can be located between the barns and the road the appearance of the buildings can be greatly improved, while at the same time the land is fully utilized. Orchards frequently can be planned to help in the problem. It is not always easy to find the right solution, but when it is once realized that a barn unsupported by greenery is as much a blot on the landscape as a house so located, efforts will be made to bring about a better condition. The planting should not hide the buildings entirely but should make them less obtrusive by par-



FIGURE 33.—Trees partially hiding the front of a barn.

tially concealing them in foliage. The barns, like the house, should not be too closely shaded. This fault, however, is seldom found about work buildings on the farm.

It is often desirable to use trees to screen objects from view (fig. 14), usually planting them as for a hedge or windbreak, although there are conditions when they may be planted as a grove to equal advantage. Such plantings are most effective when located near the object to be hidden, although occasionally a tree or two near the point of observation must accomplish the purpose. Caution needs to be observed not to plant too many trees nor to have them too close together. When planted, the ordinary tree looks so small that it seems as though it could never fill the space provided. Frequently trees are planted with the expectation of removing some of them, but when the time comes the home makers have become so attached to them that the inclination is to leave them a little longer and a little longer until the proper time for removal is past, the permanent trees are ruined, and still the temporary trees remain.

Except in the extreme South, only deciduous trees should be used for shade close to buildings, so that all the light possible will be available during the winter, though at a distance of 75 to 100 feet or more evergreen trees can be used either in some of the groups provided for shade or in the screen plantings. A few evergreen trees or shrubs add materially to the attractiveness of plantings in winter.

SHRUBS

A farmstead with trees, without the addition of shrubs and vines, will still appear bare and unfinished. Besides having a portion of their tops hidden by foliage, the farm buildings also need to have much of their foundation hidden. The lines of a building are mostly straight and formal. To make these a part of an informal picture it is necessary to have the straight lines broken and disguised as much as possible. For this reason it is desirable to put masses of shrubs of different heights and widths at various points around



FIGURE 34.—Buildings look appropriate when they rest in a mass of trees and shrubs. Additional trees are needed near the house as a setting and for shade.

the foundations (fig. 34) so as to hide and modify the straight lines instead of drawing attention to them. On the other hand, portions of the foundation should be left exposed, and the lawn should be carried directly to these so that the buildings will appear to be supported. Success in planting is achieved when the buildings appear as though they belonged to the place and fitted naturally together and into the landscape. This is best accomplished by having them rest in a mass of trees and shrubs (fig. 34), while standing firmly on visible foundations. The corners are usually convenient places to plant with tall broad clumps, and these may often be extended into the lawns for a considerable distance. Angles formed by porches, by steps, or by an ell of the building are other points frequently utilized for such groups. Tall groups often may be used also against wide places between windows, while only low ones may be used under windows. Care must be taken not to have the different groups too much alike in breadth, height, and texture of foliage, or in "expression" as it is called.

To emphasize the feeling that the house belongs to the surroundings the appearance of definite boundaries to the lawns should be avoided as much as possible. On most farms it is necessary to limit rather definitely the ground devoted to the home, but this limitation



FIGURE 35.—A barn as seen from the front door of a farm home.



FIGURE 36.—The same barn shown in Figure 35 as seen 8 years later.

should not be made any more emphatic than can be helped. As already suggested, it is often possible to have a pasture or a meadow adjoin the lawn with an inconspicuous fence between. Another help to this impression is to disguise the actual boundaries by irregular plantings along them. Where it is possible, distant views or near-by

landscapes should be made to appear as though they were a part of the grounds. Much can be accomplished to this end by the proper location of trees and shrub groups on the boundaries of the home lot. Openings should be left in the plantings to expose desirable views from the windows of the most used rooms, porches, or portions of the lawn, and plants of suitable size and height should be used to hide the less desirable outlooks. If there be a broad view, it is usually made more interesting by being divided into parts, as 30° , or one-twelfth of the circumference of a circle, is about as much as the eye can see at one time, and this is as much as should be included in a single view of a distant landscape. If it is necessary to inclose the home lot, the most inconspicuous wire fence possible is desirable, although sometimes a fence covered with vines or a

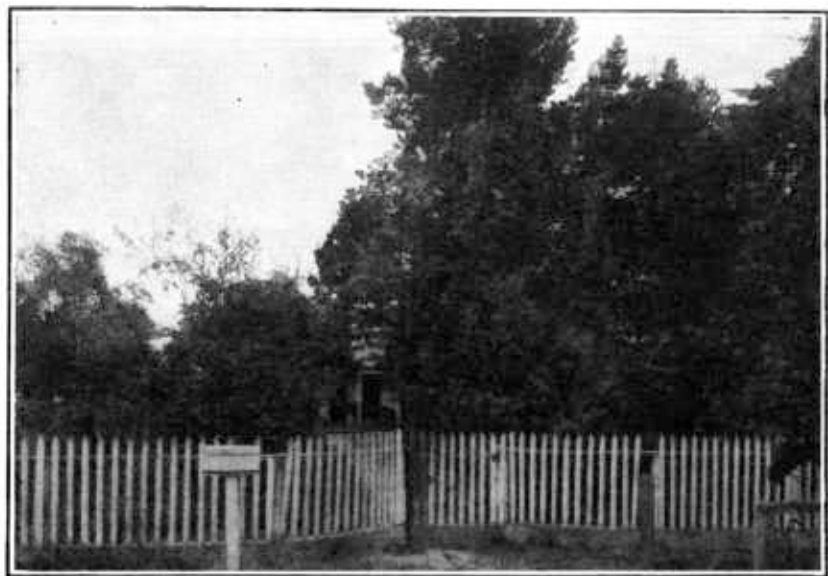


FIGURE 37.—Part of a screen that helps to give privacy and protection from a much-used dusty road.

hedge is better. As fences or hedges accentuate the boundaries, they usually should be avoided, and when used they should be made to attract as little attention as possible. Their tendency is to give a "penned-up" feeling rather than the feeling of freedom that especially should be associated with the country home. Sometimes, however, a screen is needed to give privacy (figs. 35 and 36).

Shrubbery is also used to help outline the course of walks and drives and give an apparent reason for turns (figs. 3, 5, 6, 10, and 12), and to make the surface less conspicuous by hiding it from many points. Such shrubbery must not be so high as to hide traffic at the intersection of walks and roads.

Besides being used on the boundaries to screen less desirable views, shrubs are also useful as screens within the grounds either to hide objectionable views or to give privacy. It is sometimes well to shut

off views between the barns and the house (figs. 35 and 36) or between buildings and the highway (figs. 37 and 38), or even to give privacy to a work yard or a flower garden. Shrubs will often do as well as trees for a low windbreak. Besides the utilitarian screening just outlined, interest may be added by partially hiding one part of the grounds from another, simply to pique curiosity. If the whole of an object is seen at one time curiosity is satisfied and interest in it is gone, but if part is hidden it invites exploration. (Fig. 39.) Narrower plantings on either side of such points will leave bays whose depths cannot be seen without further inspection. In the same way a clump may be used occasionally to excite interest by partially hiding a portion of the grounds. Not many such groups can ordinarily be used. There is danger of dwarfing the apparent size, especially on small grounds, unless great care is observed in so locating shrubs



FIGURE 38.—The farmhouse behind the screen shown in Figure 37.

that they do not obstruct what would otherwise be good vistas. Clumps must have some apparent connection with other plantings and should seem to be a part of border plantings, of base plantings, or of plantings along the drives and walks. A bed alone in the middle of a lawn detracts from the appearance instead of adding to it.

An individual plant seldom can be used to advantage. Where a small mass is desired and a shrub has the size and habit required to fill that particular need, then a single specimen may be used. Occasionally a shrub can be set just in front of massed plantings in order to give a variety, but as a rule this result can be obtained better by combining the shrubs differently in the groups.

OTHER PLANTS

Vines are among the most useful plants for "tying" buildings to their surroundings. There is a freedom and grace about their growth

that helps to relieve the formality of building or fences better than almost any other plants (fig. 2), but care in their selection is necessary. They are also appropriate on fences, arbors, and pergolas, or on summer houses connected with the pleasure grounds or outdoor living sections of the grounds.

Besides the plants already suggested for the principal plantings, herbaceous perennials and annual flowering plants offer a large amount of material that is very useful to add bloom and color where these may be lacking.⁵

PLANT MATERIAL

In planting the farmstead the particular plants used, if hardy and adapted to the region and locality, are of less importance than the general effect of the mass. The expression of the mass, however, is dependent on the combined effect of the characters of the plants com-



FIGURE 39.—Promontories on border plantings.

posing it. There are great differences of expression between the exclamatory or "look-at-me" impression created by the Lombardy poplar and other tall slim plants and the sympathetic and almost mournful impression given by drooping plants, like the weeping willow; between the sturdy self-reliant attitude, typified essentially by the white oak and the live oak, and the dependent or clinging attitude expressed by vines; between the formal expression of symmetrical rigid-growing plants, like the firs and spruces, and the informal expression of the tamarisk; and between the heavy effect of plants with large dark leaves and the airy effect of plants with small light-green leaves.

⁵ For suggestions on growing different types of herbaceous plants to supplement shrubbery temporarily, consult the following publications:

CORBETT, L. C., and MULFORD, F. L. GROWING ANNUAL FLOWERING PLANTS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1171, 62 pp., illus. 1929.

MULFORD, F. L. HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1381, 84 pp., illus. 1929.

Plants with great differences of expression should not be used too close together, but should be united by those with intermediate characters. The lines of the different parts of the mass should flow into one another without too great contrasts. Transitions in color and texture should also be gradual. The more unusual the characters of a plant the greater is the need for carefully placing it where it will be most pleasing.

Plants selected for home-ground ornamentation should be hardy in the region, should be comparatively free from attacks by insects and diseases, should have a reasonable quantity of foliage that is not liable to drop from slightly adverse conditions, especially weather conditions, and should be of the proper size, habit, and texture for the location; that is, where a tall upright shrub is needed a tall spreading one should not be used. Most of the plantings should be of comparatively few kinds, although a few specimens of unusual sorts will give variety and add a certain amount of interest. The characters of plants that make them valuable for adornment are (1) foliage, (2) winter effect, and (3) flowers. The importance of foliage is due to its permanency, lasting from five months to a year, depending on the type of plant, the latitude, and the elevation, while the period of bloom is short, usually not more than two weeks.

Next to foliage in importance comes the winter effect. Taking the United States as a whole, the average time that deciduous plants are without foliage is at least five months. During this period the farm home is occupied as continuously as in summer, and the surroundings should be as attractive as possible. Evergreen shrubs, both coniferous and broad leaved, maintain a color throughout the winter not otherwise obtained. Used in moderation, they are a distinct addition at this season. On the other hand, many deciduous shrubs have attractive winter characters, the most striking being bright-colored berries. Then there are barks of many shades of brown and gray, with some of bright red, green, and yellow, that if properly arranged make pleasing contrasts and add to the winter beauty. The short blooming period of the average shrub makes flowers the least important of the characters to be considered. In spite of this, the color, character, and time of blooming should be considered, as well as the behavior of the dying flowers, whether or not they fade to a conspicuous and undesirable color and hang on unduly or pass away without a distinctly unsightly stage.

The different kinds of plants should be selected so that they will give bloom through as much of the season as practicable, thus affording something of special interest as continuously as possible. The bulk of the planting, however, should be of a few species. Eight to a dozen kinds are enough for an ordinary place. With this small number, selected as far as practicable to bloom at different seasons, there is little danger of getting color combinations that will not harmonize. Where especially bright colors are selected, others should not be chosen for growing next to them during the same season unless they harmonize. Near brick buildings, or buildings painted with bright colors, care must be exercised in selecting shrubs with colored flowers. White flowers are always safe and can be used to help in giving other flowers an appropriate setting. A plentiful use of the different greens or a mixture of many colors is also safe.

It is only when one or two colors are selected for use in quantity that danger of lack of harmony arises.⁶

In addition to locating clumps of shrubbery at appropriate places on the grounds, the placing of the various kinds of plants in the clumps has an important relation to the ultimate results. It is usual not to plant many clumps of a single kind. A mixture of plants of similar size in each clump often gives pleasing results. One clump may be composed of one-half of one variety, one-fourth of another, and the rest of other kinds, while another can be nearly equally divided between two kinds, and still another can be three-fourths of one kind and the remainder of any combination. Where a large quantity of one variety is used in a clump, it is well to have at least a few of the same plants in some of the nearby groups. In nature, trees and shrubs are mostly found in large quantities, either almost alone or well mixed with other plants. As the boundaries of these areas are reached, the plants are found in more or less scattered clumps, until the place is reached where there are none. In a similar way the plantings should be in comparatively large masses with scattered plants in other nearby clumps, as shown in figure 40, where the arrangement is indicated by different numbers for different kinds. The plants should be set at irregular distances apart, so as to avoid being in lines in any direction.

By making a few clumps largely of one kind of shrub and by scattering plants of it in others, the impression may be given of the yard being full of this plant when in the height of its bloom. Then, by having another shrub predominate in other clumps with more scattering plants a similar impression may be created for another plant of another season. Other kinds can then be restricted to limited portions of the grounds. If for any reason it seems desirable to use a certain shrub only in one particular clump, this clump can be made to appear to belong to the rest of the planting by including in that mass a specimen of two of the shrubs predominating in the adjoining groups. Most clumps need plants of different heights, the taller ones at the back, the shorter in front, and plants of any height may be used for "tying" them together. More than one height of plant may often be used for this purpose.

The kind of plants to use is of less importance than their location upon the grounds. In all sections of the country there is native material that is more desirable for local planting than most of the plants brought from other places. The more trying the conditions for plant growth, the more important it is to secure native species and stock of the commoner things that have been grown from seeds or plants gathered near home. There is wild material in every neighborhood that is more suitable for planting in that locality than nine-tenths of the plants described in the catalogues. The common wild plants of any neighborhood should be largely used for home planting. Although many may be so common they have gotten in the way of cultivation, still they may be beautiful and have value for ornamental planting (fig. 41). Nearly all improve with culture. Where possible to collect them from their native habitat there is a satisfaction in the final results that is not obtained from purchased material. Those

⁶ For a fuller discussion of this subject consult Farmers' Bul. 1171.

collected in the vicinity are usually more difficult to transplant successfully than the same sort of plants purchased from a nursery. This is because in the wild the roots have never been pruned and so

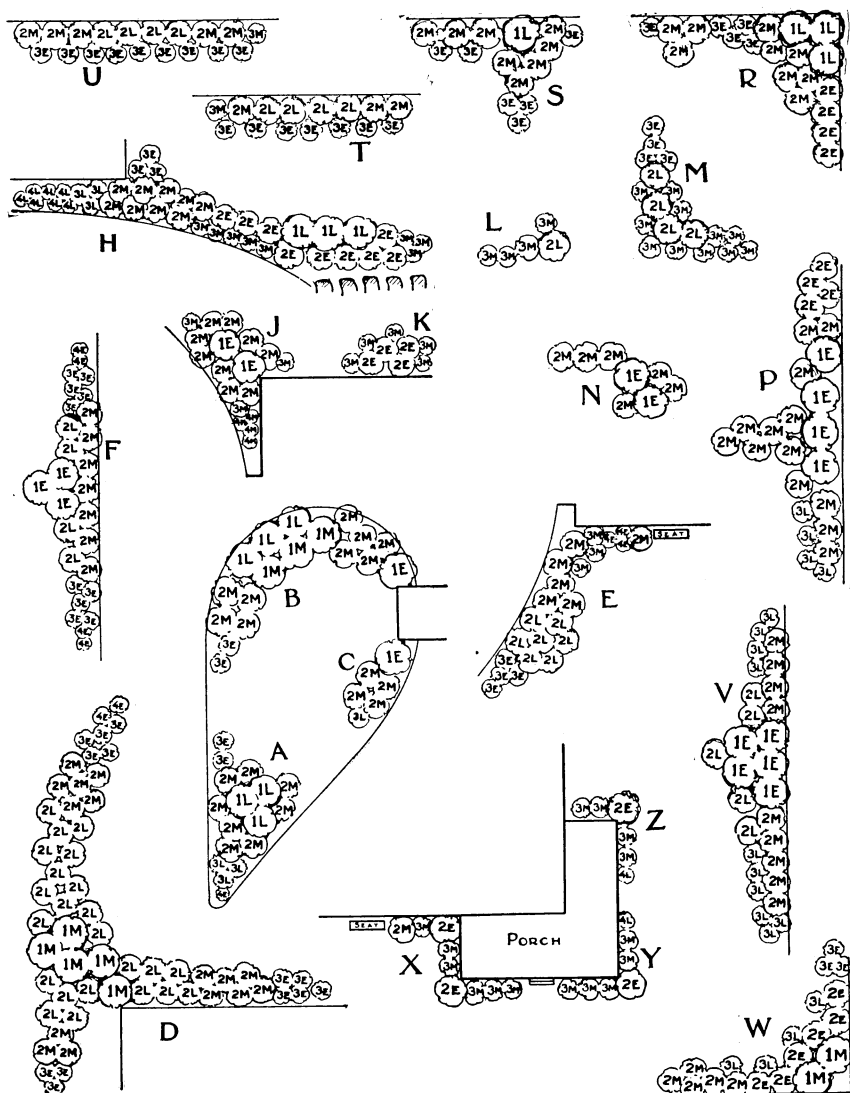


FIGURE 40.—Sketch showing the plant arrangement in the groups illustrated in figure 12. The number signifies the height of the shrub: 1, Large, 10 to 15 feet; 2, medium, 6 to 10 feet; 3, small, 2 to 6 feet; 4, low, 1 to 2 feet. The letter signifies the period of bloom; E, early; M, midsummer; L, late.

have run to long distances, with the result that when the plant is dug more roots are cut off than when taken from a nursery where they have been root pruned frequently.⁷

⁷ For information on methods of transplanting and on collecting plants from the wild, consult the following publication: MULFORD, F. L. TRANSPLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1591. 34 pp. illus. 1920.

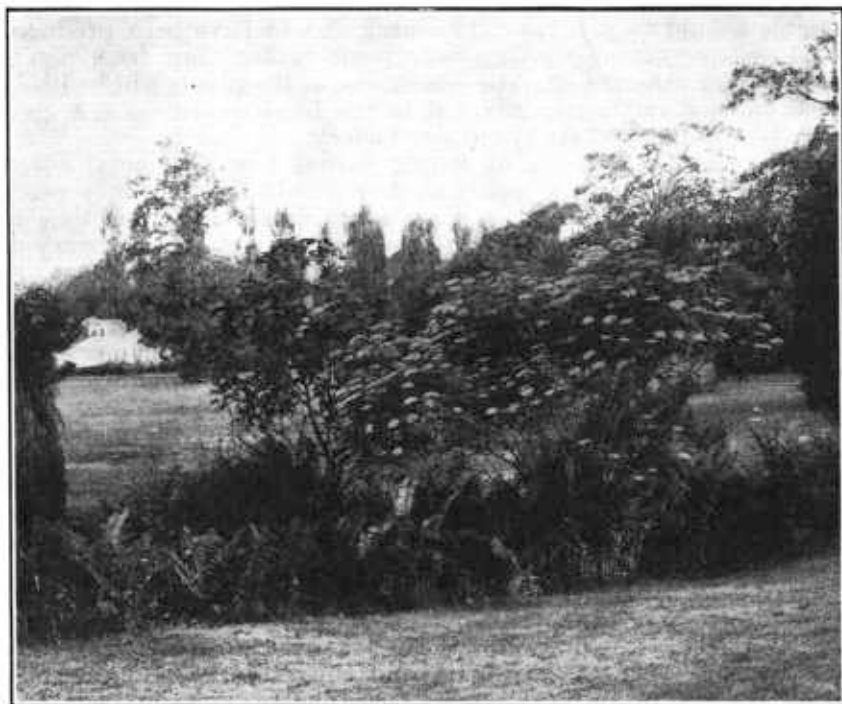


FIGURE 41.—A handsome native shrub, the elder. It grows nearly everywhere in the United States.



FIGURE 42.—Shrubs that need thinning. Too much of the foundation line is hidden, and the house seems smothered by them.

If the plants are to be purchased, a reliable nurseryman located where the climatic conditions are as nearly like the local conditions as possible should be selected. The stock should have been produced from seeds or cuttings grown near home rather than from plants grown under different climatic conditions, as the plants will be likely to be hardier and better adapted to the local conditions. A partially tender plant is always unsatisfactory.

There are two methods of setting shrubs for ornamental effect. One is to set them as far apart as they should be when they reach maturity, and the other to set them more closely and from time to time remove some of them. With the first method it is necessary to use annuals or perennials between the shrubs for a year or two in order to have the beds and clumps filled. This usually does not entail much extra work, as such plants are frequently wanted at some point on the grounds or in the garden for their bright summer effect. The difficulty with the second method is that the thinning is not likely to be done as soon as it should be. (Fig. 42.) Where only part of the spaces set aside for planting are ready, the plants for all the spaces may often be put where the beds are prepared, and then the extra plants can be taken to the place designed for them as soon as the beds are ready. In this way, too, it is possible to start with smaller, cheaper plants than where an immediate result is attempted with permanent plants only.

After trees and shrubs are planted they will need hoeing and manure for two or three years until well established, when they can, for the most part, take care of themselves, unless rapid growth is a consideration; then the manuring and cultivation should continue. After becoming established they will need little pruning further than to remove dead or broken wood. If a mistake is made in the original selections, so that the plants of a wrong size, habit, or texture are placed at any point, no hesitation should be felt about correcting the error by removing them and putting appropriate plants in their places.